

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 16/017/2002

12 December 2002

Further information on UA 272/02 (MDE 16/011/2002, 30 August 2002) Death Penalty/Torture/Unfair trial

JORDAN Yaser Muhammad Ahmad Salamah Abu Shannar (m) aged 32

Yaser Muhammad Ahmad Salamah Abu Shannar was executed at Swaqa Prison on 4 December, in connection with the killing of Jordanian diplomat Na'ib 'Umran al-Ma'aytah in Beirut in 1994. Yaser Muhammad Ahmad Salamah Abu Shannar had reportedly denied the charges against him and claimed to have confessed under torture during his interrogation.

He was apparently sentenced to death following an unfair trial before the State Security Court in December 2001. The charges against him included "plotting terrorist acts that led to the death of a human being" and "membership of an illegal organization". The Jordanian authorities claim he was a member of the *Fatah* Revolutionary Council, a splinter group of the Palestinian faction *Fatah*.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International has frequently expressed concern that the State Security Court, which almost invariably uses military judges and a military prosecutor, does not provide the same guarantees of independence and impartiality provided by the ordinary courts. The UN Human Rights Committee, commenting on Jordan's implementation of the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in 1994, expressed concern that "the State Security Court continues to exercise special jurisdiction" and recommended that consideration be given to its abolition.

Amnesty International does not in any way condone violent crime, but opposes the death penalty in all cases as the ultimate form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Capital punishment has never been shown to have a unique deterrent effect and a death sentence is irrevocable.

At least 13 people have been executed since the beginning of the year in Jordan. At least four of these were executed following unfair trials.

Many thanks to all those who sent appeals. Please send a final round of appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Arabic, English or your own language:

- expressing dismay at the recent execution of Yaser Muhammad Ahmad Salamah Abu Shannar;
- expressing your sympathy for the victims of violent crime and recognizing the rights and responsibilities of governments to bring to justice those suspected of criminal offences, but stating your unconditional opposition to the death penalty irrespective of the crime for which it is imposed, as the ultimate violation of the right to life;
- expressing concern at the number of executions carried out in Jordan each year;
- urging that no more executions be carried out and that the government work towards abolishing the death penalty;
- noting that governments have not only a right but also an obligation to bring those who plan or perpetrate violent crimes to justice, but that this should be done in accordance with international standards for fair trials;
- expressing concern that apparently no independent investigation was carried out into the torture allegations in this case.

APPEALS TO:

His Majesty King =Abdallah bin Hussein
Office of H.M. the King
Royal Palace
Amman
The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
Telegrams: King >Abdallah bin Hussein, Amman, Jordan
Faxes: + 962 6 462 7421
Salutation: Your Majesty

Faris Nabulsi
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Telegrams: Justice Minister, Amman, Jordan
Fax: + 962 6 463 1452
Salutation: Your Excellency

Dr Fayez Tarawneh
Chief of the Royal Court
PO Box 80
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Fax: + 962 6 463 1452
Salutation: Dear Dr Tarawneh

COPIES TO:

Her Majesty Queen Rania
President of the Royal Commission on Human Rights
Office of her Majesty the Queen
Royal Palace
Amman
The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
Salutation: Your Majesty

and to diplomatic representatives of Jordan accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.